

office as a Member of the new 115th Congress of the United States and given that next week we will watch President-elect Trump also take the oath of office, I want to share a few thoughts on the deep importance of this constitutional duty that we share.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, last week on Capitol Hill was marked by a day of celebration. It was a day of renewal of friendships, even between people who have deep, deep disagreements in this body. Families and guests all gathered to share in the moment's excitement and meaning, and Members of Congress congratulated one another on their recent victories. We all took a reprieve from the intensity of the policy debate for just a moment. But amidst all of that swirl of activity, the day was set apart by the oath of office.

Mr. Speaker, the oath lays down a clear marker of the serious obligations ahead for all of us. In our day and time, we no longer are deeply connected to this concept of oath. We see it in the courtroom when somebody is required to tell the truth. We will see it again next week when President-elect Trump is sworn in. But we rarely take the time to reflect on its deeper meaning.

We see it more like an old tradition, a nostalgic option that we exercise out of deference to our history. However, the oath is much, much more. It is a solemn declaration. It is a pause, the start of sacred duty.

By taking an oath, you effectively hold your very self at ransom. You commit, at the deepest levels, that you will perform the tasks ahead of you to the best of your ability.

The oath is the ultimate test and measure of integrity. If you violate it, you tear at the center of your being, to the detriment of not only yourself but to the community, to those you are sworn to serve. This is a very high bar, indeed, Mr. Speaker.

I am reminded of the words of Sir Thomas More, who was the Lord High Chancellor of England during the 16th century. He strove to live a life worthy of excellence in public service. But in the end, he was put to death by the very state that he sought to so nobly serve.

In an earlier reflection on the idea of oath, Sir Thomas More had this to say: "When a man takes an oath, he's holding his own self in his own hands like water, and if he opens his fingers then, he needn't hope to find himself again."

Mr. Speaker, throughout that wonderful day last week of our swearing in here in the body, I was reflecting personally on a singular word. That word is replenishment.

Our American system of governance has an extraordinary capacity to replenish itself with new ideas, new people, and refreshed perspectives. Our political system starts with the belief that political power is derived from each person's dignity.

By voting, citizens invest that very power in the Representatives that are

sent here to make judgments on their behalf. But, of course, to earn that right in the first place, the Representative must make his case to the people. In spite of the drama, in spite of the raucous nature of elections—and we have just come through one—the fact that America goes through this cycle of constant replenishment is truly an extraordinary gift.

Mr. Speaker, as I stood in the center aisle right here last week, I raised my right hand. I raised it right along with everyone else who is a Member of this new 115th Congress, and I took that oath of office.

Mr. Speaker, I just think it is worthwhile to read these powerful words:

"I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God."

Mr. Speaker, indeed, this is a very high bar. This is a sacred duty. This is a solemn task. It sets this body and our system of governance apart by forcing each of us who have been given this extraordinary privilege of taking on the heavy mantle and weighty responsibility of making decisions on behalf of this great country, and to do so to the best of our ability, having put our very self, the integrity of what it means to be a person, on the line to uphold that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### 115TH CONGRESS STAFF DEPOSITION AUTHORITY PROCEDURES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON RULES,  
WASHINGTON, DC, JANUARY 13, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
*Speaker, House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 3(b)(2) of House Resolution 5, 115th Congress, I hereby submit the following regulations regarding the conduct of depositions by committee and select committee staff for printing in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

PETE SESSIONS,  
*Chairman, Committee on Rules.*

#### 115TH CONGRESS STAFF DEPOSITION AUTHORITY PROCEDURES

1. Notices for the taking of depositions shall specify the date, time, and place of examination (if other than within the committee offices). Depositions shall be taken under oath administered by a member or a person otherwise authorized to administer oaths.

2. Consultation with the ranking minority member shall include three days notice before any deposition is taken. All members of the committee shall also receive three days notice that a deposition will be taken. For purposes of these procedures, a day shall not include Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays except when the House is in session on such a day.

3. Witnesses may be accompanied at a deposition by personal, nongovernmental coun-

sel to advise them of their rights. Only members, committee staff designated by the chair or ranking minority member, an official reporter, the witness, and the witness's counsel are permitted to attend. The chair of the committee that noticed the deposition may designate that deposition as part of a joint investigation between committees. If such a designation is made, the chair and ranking minority member of the committee that provided notice of such deposition may each also designate up to two committee staff from committees designated as part of the joint investigation to attend the deposition after consultation with the chair or ranking minority member of the designated committees. Observers or counsel for other persons, including counsel for government agencies, may not attend.

4. If member attendance is required, the deposition will stand in recess for any period in which a member is not present.

5. A deposition shall be conducted by any member or staff attorney designated by the chair or ranking minority member. When depositions are conducted by committee staff attorneys, there shall be no more than two committee staff attorneys permitted to question a witness per round. One of the committee staff attorneys shall be designated by the chair and the other by the ranking minority member per round. Other committee staff members designated by the chair or ranking minority member, including designated staff from additional committees in the case of a joint investigation, may attend, but may not question the witness.

6. Deposition questions shall be propounded in rounds. The length of each round shall be determined by the chair after consultation with the ranking minority member, shall not exceed 90 minutes per side, and shall provide equal time to the majority and the minority. In each round, a member or committee staff attorney designated by the chair shall ask questions first, and the member or committee staff attorney designated by the ranking minority member shall ask questions second.

7. Only the witness or the witness's personal counsel may make objections during a deposition. Objections must be stated concisely and in a non-argumentative and non-suggestive manner. A committee may punish counsel who violate these requirements by censure, and by suspension or exclusion, either generally or in a particular investigation, from further representation of clients before the committee. A committee may also cite the counsel to the House for contempt. If the witness raises an objection, the deposition will proceed, and testimony taken is subject to any objection. The witness may refuse to answer a question only to preserve a testimonial privilege. When the witness has objected and refused to answer a question to preserve a testimonial privilege, the chair of the committee may rule on any such objection after the deposition has recessed. If the chair overrules any such objection and thereby orders a witness to answer any question to which a testimonial privilege objection was lodged, such ruling shall be filed with the clerk of the committee and shall be provided to the members and the witness no less than three days before the reconvened deposition. If the witness or a member of the committee chooses to appeal the ruling of the chair, such appeal must be made within three days, in writing, and shall be preserved for committee consideration. A deponent who refuses to answer a question after being directed to answer by the chair in writing may be subject to sanction, except that no sanctions may be imposed if the ruling of the chair is reversed on appeal.

8. Committee chairs shall ensure that the testimony is either transcribed or electronically recorded or both. If a witness's testimony is transcribed, the witness or the witness's counsel shall be afforded an opportunity to review a copy. No later than five days after a transcript is made available to the witness, the witness may submit suggested changes to the chair. Committee staff may make any typographical and technical changes. Substantive changes, modifications, clarifications, or amendments to the deposition transcript submitted by the witness must be accompanied by a letter signed by the witness requesting the changes and a statement of the witness's reasons for each proposed change. Any substantive changes, modifications, clarifications, or amendments shall be included as an appendix to the transcript conditioned upon the witness signing the transcript.

9. The individual administering the oath, if other than a member, shall certify on the transcript that the witness was duly sworn. The transcriber shall certify that the transcript is a true record of the testimony, and the transcript shall be filed, together with any electronic recording, with the clerk of the committee in Washington, DC. Depositions shall be considered to have been taken in Washington, DC, as well as the location actually taken once filed there with the clerk of the committee for the committee's use. The chair and the ranking minority member shall be provided with a copy of the transcripts of the deposition at the same time.

10. The chair and ranking minority member shall consult regarding the release of deposition transcripts and recordings. If either objects in writing to a proposed release of a deposition transcript or recording, or a portion thereof, the matter shall be promptly referred to the committee for resolution.

11. A witness shall not be required to testify unless the witness has been provided with a copy of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and these procedures.

## PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE RULES

### RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully submit the Rules of the Committee on Armed Services for the 115th Congress, as adopted by the committee on January 12, 2017.

#### RULE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) The Rules of the House of Representatives are the rules of the Committee on Armed Services (hereinafter referred to in these rules as the "Committee") and its subcommittees so far as applicable.

(b) Pursuant to clause 2(a)(2) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's rules shall be publicly available in electronic form and published in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the chair of the committee is elected in each odd-numbered year.

#### RULE 2. FULL COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

(a) The Committee shall meet every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., when the House of Representatives is in session, and at such other times as may be fixed by the Chairman of the Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Chairman"), or by written request of members of the Committee pursuant to clause 2(c) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

(b) A Wednesday meeting of the Committee may be dispensed with by the Chairman, but

such action may be reversed by a written request of a majority of the members of the Committee.

#### RULE 3. SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the Committee on all matters referred to it. Insofar as possible, meetings of the Committee and its subcommittees shall not conflict. A subcommittee Chairman shall set meeting dates after consultation with the Chairman, other subcommittee Chairmen, and the Ranking Minority Member of the subcommittee with a view toward avoiding, whenever possible, simultaneous scheduling of Committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings.

#### RULE 4. JURISDICTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES

##### (a) Jurisdiction

(1) The Committee retains jurisdiction of all subjects listed in clause 1(c) and clause 3(b) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives and retains exclusive jurisdiction for: defense policy generally, ongoing military operations, the organization and reform of the Department of Defense and Department of Energy, counter-drug programs, security and humanitarian assistance (except special operations-related activities) of the Department of Defense, acquisition and industrial base policy, technology transfer and export controls, joint interoperability, detainee affairs and policy, force protection policy and inter-agency reform as it pertains to the Department of Defense and the nuclear weapons programs of the Department of Energy. In addition the committee will be responsible for intelligence policy (including coordination of military intelligence programs), national intelligence programs, and Department of Defense elements that are part of the Intelligence Community. While subcommittees are provided jurisdictional responsibilities in subparagraph (2), the Committee retains the right to exercise oversight and legislative jurisdiction over all subjects within its purview under rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

(2) The Committee shall be organized to consist of seven standing subcommittees with the following jurisdictions:

Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces: All Army, Air Force and Marine Corps acquisition programs (except Marine Corps amphibious assault vehicle programs, strategic missiles, space, lift programs, special operations, science and technology programs, and information technology accounts) and the associated weapons systems sustainment. In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for Navy and Marine Corps aviation programs and the associated weapons systems sustainment, National Guard and Army, Air Force and Marine Corps Reserve modernization, and ammunition programs.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel: Military personnel policy, Reserve Component integration and employment issues, military health care, military education, and POW/MIA issues. In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for Morale, Welfare and Recreation issues and programs.

Subcommittee on Readiness: Military readiness, training, logistics and maintenance issues and programs. In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for all military construction, depot policy, civilian personnel policy, environmental policy, installations and family housing issues, including the base closure process, and energy policy and programs of the Department of Defense.

Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces: Navy acquisition programs, Naval Reserve equipment, and Marine Corps am-

phibious assault vehicle programs (except strategic weapons, space, special operations, science and technology programs, and information technology programs), deep strike bombers and related systems, lift programs, seaborne unmanned aerial systems and the associated weapons systems sustainment. In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for Maritime programs under the jurisdiction of the Committee as delineated in paragraphs 5 and 9 of clause 1(c) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces: Strategic weapons (except deep strike bombers and related systems), space programs (including national intelligence space programs), ballistic missile defense, the associated weapons systems sustainment, and Department of Energy national security programs.

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities: Defense-wide and joint enabling activities and programs to include: Special Operations Forces; counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism programs and initiatives; science and technology policy and programs; information technology programs; homeland defense and Department of Defense related consequence management programs; related intelligence support; and other enabling programs and activities to include cyber operations, strategic communications, and information operations; and the Cooperative Threat Reduction program.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: Any matter within the jurisdiction of the Committee, subject to the concurrence of the Chairman of the Committee and, as appropriate, affected subcommittee chairmen. The subcommittee shall have no legislative jurisdiction.

##### (b) Membership of the Subcommittees

(1) Subcommittee memberships, with the exception of membership on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, shall be filled in accordance with the rules of the Majority party's conference and the Minority party's caucus, respectively.

(2) The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations shall be filled in accordance with the rules of the Majority party's conference and the Minority party's caucus, respectively. Consistent with the party ratios established by the Majority party, all other Majority members of the subcommittee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Committee, and all other Minority members shall be appointed by the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee.

(3) The Chairman of the Committee and Ranking Minority Member thereof may sit as ex officio members of all subcommittees. Ex officio members shall not vote in subcommittee hearings or meetings or be taken into consideration for the purpose of determining the ratio of the subcommittees or establishing a quorum at subcommittee hearings or meetings.

(4) A member of the Committee who is not a member of a particular subcommittee may sit with the subcommittee and participate during any of its hearings but shall not have authority to vote, cannot be counted for the purpose of achieving a quorum, and cannot raise a point of order at the hearing.

#### RULE 5. COMMITTEE PANELS AND TASK FORCES

##### (a) Committee Panels

(1) The Chairman may designate a panel of the Committee consisting of members of the Committee to inquire into and take testimony on a matter or matters that fall within the jurisdiction of more than one subcommittee and to report to the Committee.

(2) No panel appointed by the Chairman shall continue in existence for more than six months after the appointment. A panel so